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From the School Yard to Cyber Space: A Pilot Study of Bullying Behaviors Among Middle School Students

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Abstract

Bullying and cyberbullying continue to be major problems in today's schools and topics of heightened public concern. This pilot study aimed to increase the knowledge base concerning bullying and cyberbullying, to explore the relationship between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, and to solicit information on the prevalence rates of technology use by students in grades 5–8 ($N=352$). This information enhances the current research in cyberbullying and contributes to the development of prevention, intervention, and response strategies, especially as they relate to school counselors and mental health providers in schools.

Introduction

Bullying has become an increasingly urgent problem affecting school-aged children and continues to be a topic of heightened public concern. This is especially true, given the recent tragic cases involving the suicide of young people due to bullying and cyberbullying (ABC News, 2011). Concomitant with escalating media attention, a considerable amount of international research has focused on this topic (see Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009; Griezel, Craven, Yeung, & Finger, 2008; Li, 2006; Newey & Magson,

2010; Parada, 2000; & Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011; Shariff, 2005; Smith et al., 2008), along with fewer analyses conducted in the United States (Kolwaski & Limber, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; & Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). Previous studies indicated bullying behavior tends to be evident in middle school (Nansel et al., 2001; Li, 2005; Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009; Wang et al., 2009), a time of transition for many adolescents. In fact, younger adolescents (ages 12–13) are more likely to report that individuals are unkind to each other on social networking sites than their older (ages 14–17) peers (Lenhart et al., 2011). This manuscript contributes to the growing cannon of literature related to the proliferation of bullying and cyberbullying among middle school students in the United States, and the urgent need for whole-school bullying interventions. Moreover, the authors assert that professional school counselors can play a pivotal role in addressing the multiple complexities surrounding bullying and help to spearhead multifaceted preventative efforts within schools and communities.

Related Research

Bullying is commonly defined as repeated behavior intended to harm another that involves a disparity of power; that is, the aggressor is seen to have more power than that of his/her target (Nansel et al., 2001;

Wang et al., 2009). Typically, traditional forms of bullying have fallen into three categories: physical (hitting, kicking), verbal (name-calling, teasing) and social (ignoring or isolating).

With the rapid increase of technology, a new form of bullying—*cyberbullying*—has become more prevalent. Although there are several variations in defining cyberbullying, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) concisely characterized it as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices” (p. 5). New definitions of power imbalances extend beyond physical prowess to one’s technological knowledge and higher levels of Internet and media literacy (Dooley et al., 2009) and include the criteria of anonymity and publicity (Bauman, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). That is, students may not know the identity of the bully, further perpetuating feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. This could also result in heightened anxiety in school, where the victim may live in chronic fear of being humiliated or embarrassed (Bauman, 2011; Dooley et al., 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Because of the anonymity, potential for widespread public transmission, and instantaneous nature of cyberbullying, some researchers have postulated, “The effect of the cyber group far surpasses the schoolyard group, given that the former is not bound by the school walls and the potential audience is limitless” (Dooley et al., 2009, p. 187).

Prevalence and Harmful Consequences of Bullying
The prevalence of bullying behaviors in schools is alarming. Some studies have found up to 30% of students self-report moderate or frequent involvement in traditional bullying (Nansel et al., 2001). The prevalence rates of cyberbullying also tend to vary widely. These variations are most likely due to the type and methodology of the investigation; the emerging, unwieldy nature of cyberbullying (Newey & Magson, 2010; Pearce et al., 2011); and the potential for under-reporting. Thus, the extent of reported cyberbullying ranges from very low (1–4%) to relatively high (49%–53%) (Bauman, 2011; Mishna et al., 2009; Mishna, Cook, Saini, Meng-Jia, & MacFadden, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). In a sample of 900 students between the ages of 11 and 18, almost 19% of respondents self-reported being cyberbullied two or more times over the course of the previous 30 days (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Smith and associates (2008) study indicated the most prevalent forms of cyberbullying reported are text messaging, phone calls, and online instant messaging. Researchers also

found that students viewed the impact of picture/video clip bullying as worse than face-to-face bullying. Moreover, students have cited cyberbullying that included widespread and public audiences as the most harmful forms (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Studies of traditional forms of bullying have found that boys engage in more direct bullying behaviors (physical, verbal) more often than girls, who are more frequently involved with indirect bullying (social exclusion, spreading rumors) (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Wang et al., 2009). Recent research has shown “girls are much more likely than boys to report they had been bullied in various ways, except in-person bullying, which happened to boys and girls in roughly equal proportion” (Lenhart et al., 2011, p. 39). Other studies have shown negligible gender differences in cyberbullying as both victims and perpetrators (see Bauman, 2011; Slonje & Smith, 2008). However, the types of cyberbullying activities and experiences vary by gender. For example, girls are more likely to be called names and to have rumors spread about them. Boys, conversely, are more likely to receive threats online (Mishna et al., 2009).

It is well-established that both girls and boys who are bullied suffer immediate harm as well as long-term mental distress. Victims may withdraw from friends and activities, experience lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression, anxiety, and anger, (Bauman, 2011; Chibbaro, 2007; Cross et al., 2009, Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Nansel et al., 2001), all of which can lead to academic disengagement and decreased academic performance (Bhat, 2008; Rigby, 1997). In the most tragic of cases, bullying and cyberbullying have been linked with increased suicidal ideation and completion (Bauman, 2011; Bhat, 2008).

Prevention and Intervention

While several studies have focused on defining bullying behavior and its prevalence, there exists a paucity of literature (see Pearce et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2008) regarding how to best intervene and which approaches are most effective. There does seem to be consensus that efforts to address cyberbullying should be developed within a comprehensive anti-bullying program (Beran & Li, 2007; Pearce et al., 2011, Ttofi & Farrington, 2011), as many victims of traditional bullying also experience cyberbullying. For example, in an Australian study, 87% of those victimized by technology reported being bullied in other ways (Cross et al., 2009).

Researchers have posited that schools can take specific measures to address the issue of bullying among students. Pearce and associates' (2011) research validated the importance of a systematic whole-school approach to effectively prevent and manage all forms of bullying behaviors in schools. Specifically, researchers found six broad, whole-school factors that were well supported and necessary to thwart bullying in schools. Briefly, these factors included engaged principal leadership, a supportive school culture, proactive school policies, procedures and practices, school-community training and education, a protective school environment, and shared ownership throughout the whole school and surrounding community. Ttofi and Farrington's (2011) meta-analytic study of 89 reports detailing evaluations of 53 different anti-bullying programs found the most effective programs to be intensive and long-lasting, to include of parent meetings, to uphold strict discipline for infractions, and to have heightened playground supervision. As noted, parent meetings seemed to be particularly helpful. This finding is not surprising, given much cyberbullying activity is initiated at home (Feinberg & Roby, 2008), and positive parental behaviors have been shown to protect adolescents from not only bullying others but also from being bullied (Wang et al., 2009).

A 2010 systematic review of the effectiveness of increasing Internet safety knowledge and decreasing risky online behavior found cyberbullying prevention and intervention initiatives, specifically *I-Safe Cyber Safety Program*, *Missing Cyber Safety Program*, and the in-school cyberbullying intervention program *Help, Assert Yourself, Humor, Avoid, Self-talk, Own it* (HAHASO), to be associated with an increase in Internet safety knowledge but not significantly associated with a change in risky online behavior (Mishna et al., 2010).

Several researchers have made recommendations for the role of education professionals to prevent and remediate bullying and cyberbullying behaviors. Feinberg and Robey (2008) advocated that principals co-create anti-bullying policies and protocols with staff and that students, staff, and parents receive education and training about bullying and cyberbullying prevention and intervention. Furthermore, Bhat (2008) recommended that school counselors offer character education and social skills training emphasizing empathy and positive peer conflict resolution, including the *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program* and the *Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program*, to all

students. She also encouraged school counselors to become knowledgeable about resources designed to educate others about online safety.

The authors of this article uphold the assertion that school counselors are uniquely qualified and trained to address not only victims of bullying but the bystanders and bullies who perpetuate violence (Bauman, 2011; Bhat, 2008). Certified, school counselors with master's degrees are trained to be leaders, advocates, and collaborators knowledgeable about human behavior, adolescent development, and large- and small-group facilitation (ASCA, 2005, 2011). The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) position statement regarding this topic states professional school counselors can spearhead training programs that include recognition of early warning signs of violence, prevention/intervention services, crisis response, appropriate use of technology and social media, community involvement, and parent/guardian and faculty/staff education (ASCA, 2005, 2011).

The Present Investigation

As noted above, an increased number of studies have focused on background variables and frequency rates of cyberbullying, with varied results. While some laudable efforts have begun with the creation of instrumentation, there remains a gap in the literature regarding cyberbullying data collection. This pilot study aimed to increase the knowledge base concerning cyberbullying, to explore the relationship between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, and to solicit information on prevalence rates of technology use by students in grades 5–8. For example, respondents were asked whether or not they own a cell phone, maintain a Facebook account, etc. This information not only will enhance the current research in cyberbullying, it will contribute to the development of prevention, intervention, and response strategies. This information is intended to create a more comprehensive understanding of students' experiences with technology as they relate to bullying.

Development of Instrument

The dearth of literature in relation to the efforts to prevent cyberbullying is perpetuated by the lack of empirically-based instruments with which to measure it. However, one Australian-based research team made needed progress in this area. Griezel and associates (2008) conducted a study of 803 Australian secondary students to analyze the *Revised Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument* (RAPRI-BT),

an extension of Parada's (2000) *Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument—Bully and Target* (APRI-BT), with the addition of items related to cyberbullying. The authors revised their original instrument in an attempt to create a means of measuring potential constructs of cyberbullying. The authors note that the majority of studies (only eight identified) contained only one or two questions specifically aimed at cyberbullying and argued that such an approach is flawed, has limited reliability, does not capture the repetitive nature of bullying, and only have potential to discern moderate to large differences (Griezel et al., 2008). The authors added 13 items they hypothesize will help build empirical research to encapsulate the experience of the two main categories of cyberbullying (text and visual). These scales were set up similar to the original scale, which addressed traditional bullying and target behaviors. Researchers conducted reliability and confirmatory factor analyses and found the RAPRI-BT to be a robust and psychometrically sound instrument. Specifically, with regard to reliability, Cronbach's alpha estimates for all subscales, including traditional bullying (physical, verbal, social) and cyberbullying (visual and texts), were good to excellent, with scores ranging from .80 to .91 (Griezel et al., 2008).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted confirmed the factor structure and validity of the RAPRI-BT. Goodness-of-fit indices demonstrated good model fit with Root-Mean Square Errors (RMSEA) of .79, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .96 and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) of .95. Given that the instrument was the first to empirically measure constructs of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, the researchers of the current study sought and received permission to use this instrument in the present investigation.

In an effort to establish validity for the instrument, Griezel and associates (2008) provided evidence that RAPRI is psychometrically sound through their reporting on confirmatory factor analyses. The authors reported using guidelines of the Room Mean Square Approximation (RMSEA, which indicate scores up to 0.08 as acceptable level of error approximation). The bully scales yielded an RMSEA of .079, placing within the acceptable range (Homes-Smith, 2000; Byrne, 2001). The authors also reported acceptable ranges on the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) with scores of .96 on both (.95 are deemed strong) (Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992). Validity was also sound on the target scores of RMSEA of .066, TLI of .97 and CFI of .97.

Method

Participants

Middle school students from two large Midwestern urban cities were recruited for the study. Students ($N = 352$) from three inter-faith, co-educational middle schools and one private, secular, co-educational middle school in grade 5 ($n = 62$), grade 6 ($n = 100$), grade 7 ($n = 105$), and grade 8 ($n = 85$) participated in this study. Students ranged in age from 10 to 15, with the mean age of 12.37 years ($SD = 1.14$).

All students in the fifth through eighth grades at each school were invited by the research team to participate in the study. Student participation was voluntary, and only students with parental consent were included in the study.

Of the 352 participants, 309 (87.8%) indicated their race/ethnicity as White, 12 (3.4%) as Black/African American, 5 (1.4%) as Asian, 7 (2.0%) as Multiracial, 1 (.3%) as Hispanic, 9 (2.6%) as other; 9 (2.6%) did not answer. Due to an error, data regarding sex was not collected consistently; therefore, demographic information regarding males and females is unavailable.

Participants were asked if they had their own cell phone, Facebook account, and Twitter account. Of the 352 participants, 257 (76.7%) owned their own cell phone, 142 (40.3 %) had a Facebook account, and 32 (10.7%) had a Twitter account. It should be noted that 14.5% of respondents did not answer the Twitter question.

Measures

The RAPRI-BT instrument is an extension of the *Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument* (APRI) (Parada, 2000), which was designed and used in Australia to measure three target behaviors in bullying: physical, verbal, and social. The RAPRI-BT expanded to include the two forms of cyberbullying behavior: visual and textual. The RAPRI-BT uses a six-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 6 = Every day) for students to respond how often they are involved in a behavior. Modifications to the RAPRI-BT were made to make the language more consistent with American English (see Appendix A).

Procedure

Due to the fact that this project was a pilot study, the researchers used a convenience sample of schools that would allow us access to as many students as possible. Once schools agreed to participate, a sampling method that invited all students in identified grades was used. Although this provided a moderate number of study participants, this sampling method

has limitations. Most notably, there is limited generalizability when using convenience samples as addressed in the Limitations section below.

After receiving written permission from the school principal of each school, a schedule detailing the study and its procedures was provided to the principals. This schedule outlined several logistical factors including dates regarding the dissemination and collection of the parental consent forms and the subsequent dates for the administration of the questionnaire. Copies of the student assent form and questionnaires were provided to each school. School counselors or teachers collected parental consent forms as the students returned them.

On commencement of testing, school counselors or teachers provided researchers with the signed parental consent forms. All students who had parental consent and wished to participate in the study were told to report, by grade level, to the school cafeteria or art room at a specific time. Students were asked to sit with an empty seat next to them to prevent discussion among students and the viewing of another student's questionnaire. The researchers made a roll call from the parental consent forms. Any student that did not have parental consent was asked to report back to his/her classroom. Homeroom teachers gave students who did not participate in the study an alternative assignment.

Prior to administering the questionnaire, the researchers verbally reviewed with the students the purpose and voluntary nature of the study as well as the risks/benefits involved and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Students were asked to sign the assent form and place it in either a box or a large envelope in the front of the room. Any student that chose not to sign the assent form was asked to return to his/her classroom.

Stapled booklets that contained a demographics sheet and the RAPRI-BT were distributed to the students. Thirty minutes was allotted for each group to complete the questionnaires, and an identification number was recorded on each questionnaire for coding purposes.

Results

First, we explored the overall prevalence rates of traditional bullying and cyberbullying as assessed by the RAPRI-BT instrument (Griezel et al., 2008). This instrument utilizes a 6-point Likert scale for all items with responses ranging from "never to every day." The RAPRI-BT contains two subscales,

one for traditional bullying behaviors and one for cyberbullying behaviors. There are questions aimed at identifying bully perpetrators and the bully targets. Prior to data analyses, reliability analyses were conducted using Cronbach's alpha for each of the subscales of the instrument using SPSS 16.0. Coefficients were as follows for the bullying scales: traditional physical bullying (.76), traditional verbal bullying (.91), and traditional social bullying (.75). Reliability analyses on cyberbullying items revealed Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .99 for the visual scale and .90 for text. Coefficients for the target scales were as follows: traditional physical (.85), traditional verbal (.93), traditional social (.93), cyberbullying visual (.91), and cyberbullying text (.86). According to Antasti and Urbina (1997), ideally, reliability estimates should be more than 0.70; thus, this instrument was robust in regard to reliability in the current study. It should be noted that the reliability rates for two subscales in traditional bullying (physical and social) were lower (.76 physical and .75 social) in the current study than what was originally reported by the instrument developers (.86 and .83, respectively).

Further examinations of the reliability analyses on both of these subscales were conducted to examine whether any specific item on the subscales attenuated the overall reliability. No substantial differences were noted by removing any particular item from the overall sample. Further, in examining the mean scores for individual items, it was observed that the lowest scores existed on the "hit or kicked someone" (0.17), "physical fight" (0.03), and the "threatened" subscales (0.22). The researchers examined reliability by city and learned that 51 participants, all of whom were from one city, endorsed a score of "0" on the physical fighting item; therefore, reliability analyses have been compromised on this item. It is uncertain why a score of "0" was endorsed by all participants at one school. The researchers hypothesize that the trend may be linked to the overall culture of this particular school, in which more blatant acts of physical bullying may be more likely to be observed behaviors (and therefore punishable) by school authorities. It is noteworthy that both schools reported overall low rates of physical incidents.

Traditional Bullying

We examined the prevalence rates of bullying behavior on the traditional bullying scales (physical, verbal, social) and on the cyberbullying scales (visual, text). Totaling the items created summary or composite scores. These were completed for each of five variables (Griezel et al., 2008). Descriptive statistics for the composite variables can be found

in Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for RAPRI-BT*. The traditional bullying scale contained six questions; thus, the composite score has a possible range of scores from 0–36. The results indicated that, overall, there were low levels of physical bullying reported ($M = 1.55$; $SD = 2.46$). When examining the frequency of scores, we viewed all scores higher than “never” to gain clarity on frequency of engagement in the behaviors. The highest confirmation of physical bullying was evident in the question about pushing or shoving another student, in which 39.7% of students endorsed. The second highest score of physical bullying was throwing something at another student to hit them. Full results for all questionnaire items can be reviewed in Table 2: *Frequencies for RAPRI-BT*.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for RAPRI-BT

Subscale	Bully	Target
Traditional bullying		
Physical	1.55 (2.46)	2.78 (3.88)
Verbal	4.66 (5.41)	4.70 (6.19)
Social	2.30 (3.42)	2.92 (5.51)
Cyberbullying		
Visual	1.71 (7.99)	0.73 (3.93)
Text	2.61 (8.44)	1.50 (4.39)

The traditional verbal bullying scale contains six items as well. The composite scores indicate an average score of 4.66 ($SD = 5.41$). As for individual questions that comprise the verbal bullying scale, 61.8% of respondents reported that they made jokes about a student. Further, 59.8% reported making rude remarks about another student, 57.8% reported that they made fun of another student by name-calling, 46% reported teasing other kids by saying things to them, and 33.5% reported engagement in verbal bullying by saying mean things about another student’s looks.

The traditional social bullying scale contains six questions. Composite scores indicate an average score of 2.30 ($SD = 3.42$). Examination of individual items indicates that the most frequently endorsed behavior (49.8%) reported (engaging in this at least sometimes) was “ignoring others when with my friends.” Almost 37.5% of respondents reported that they ignored others by pretending not to see them, and approximately 36% of respondents stated that they ignored someone by turning their back on them.

Traditional Bullying: Targets

In addition to examining the behaviors of bullying, we reviewed parallel scores of items endorsed by the recipients, or targets, of bullying. The questions aimed at exploring the experiences of targets were also divided into three domains: physical, verbal, and social. The physical scale contains five items while the verbal and social scales each contain six items. Each subscale is scored using the same Likert Scale previously described. Composite scores for each subscale were figured. Results indicated that the average score on the target physical subscale was 2.77 ($SD = 3.88$). The most frequently endorsed behavior by targets was “being pushed or shoved,” as 47% reported this occurring at least sometimes. Approximately 35.3% reported that something was intentionally thrown at them to hit them, and 32% of participants reported being “hit or kicked hard.” Further, just over 31% of participants reported that they had property damaged, and similar rates were reported for having “someone crash into them.”

The target subscale of verbal bullying was examined for all participants using both a composite summary score and examination of each individual question. Composite results indicate that, on average, respondents had scores of 4.69 ($SD = 6.19$). Upon review of individual questions comprising this scale, results indicated that the most frequently experienced behavior was being teased and having rude remarks made about them (53.4%), and almost half the respondents reported that jokes were made about them (49.6%). Less frequently endorsed behaviors experienced by targets included being called names they did not like (42.8%), having things said about their looks that they did not like (37.6%), and being ridiculed verbally (31.9%).

The final subscale targets of traditional bullying included the social scale, comprised of six items including “student would not be friends because others did not like me,” “students ignored me,” “student got others not to have anything to do with me,” “students ignored me by turning their backs,” “I was not invited to someone’s home because others did not like me.” The range for the composite score was 0–36. The composite score revealed an average score of 2.30 ($SD = 3.42$). Review of individual items indicates more frequent experiences of being ignored (40.9%), being ignored by someone turning his/her back (27.2%), and someone not being his/her friend because others did not like him/her (22.5%). Other bullying behaviors experienced by targets include a student getting other students “not to have anything to do with me” (22.4%), and a student getting “his/her friends to turn against me” (21.1%).

Table 2
Frequencies for RAPRI-BT

	Never	Sometimes	1–2 Per Month	1 Per Week	Several Times Per Week	Every Day
Traditional bullying						
Hit or kicked	85.5	12.5	0	0	0.6	0
Pushed or shoved	59.7	32.7	3.4	1.4	2.3	0
Crashed on purpose	79.3	18.2	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.3
Physical fight	97.4	2.3	0	0	0	0.3
Threw something	72.4	22.7	3.4	0.9	0	0.3
Threatened	83	14.2	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.9
Social bullying						
Made fun	42	43.7	6	2.3	3.2	2.6
Teased	54.2	34.7	5.2	2.3	1.7	1.7
Rude remarks	40	48	4.9	2.9	3.1	0.9
Jokes about	38	45	7.8	4.9	2.9	1.2
Said things about looks	66.2	24.6	4.6	1.7	1.7	0.9
Name-calling	49.7	38.9	4.6	1.4	2.9	2
Verbal bullying						
Friends turn against	86.9	11.9	0.3	0	0.3	0
Ignored when with friends	50	40.1	7.1	0.9	1.1	0.6
Turned back	63.6	30.1	3.7	0	1.4	0.9
Pretend not to see	62.1	31.3	2.6	1.1	1.4	1.1
Got others to ignore	90.6	7.1	2	0	0	0
Left out	75.9	20.2	3.1	0.3	0.6	0
Cyberbully visual						
Cell phone to forward video to embarrass	95.2	1.4	0	0	0	0
Cell phone to take photo to embarrass	88	6.8	1.1	0.3	0	0
Cell to send photo to embarrass	92	4.6	0	0	0	0
Cell phone to send video to embarrass	94.9	1.7	0	0	0	0
Recorded video of student being mean to others and sent it	95.7	0.9	0	0	0	0
Cyberbully text						
Used e-mail without permission	97.4	4.6	0.3	0	0	0
Sent e-mail to hurt feelings	93.4	4.6	0.3	0	0	0
Nasty jokes via instant chat	79.2	14.5	2.3	1.1	0	0
Used instant chat w/o permission	90.9	5.1	0.6	0.9	0	0
Wrote nasty things on profile page	87.5	5.4	0.9	0	0.6	0
Created profile w/o knowledge	92	1.1	0.3	0	0	0
Sent text message to hurt	83.4	10.6	2	0.3	0.3	0

Cyberbullying: Bullies

We explored scores on the two subscales: bully text and bully visual. The bully text subscale contains seven items, with a total range of 0–42. Composite scores were created for each of these; individual items were also analyzed. The composite bully text score indicated an average score of 2.61 ($SD = 8.44$). The most frequently confirmed cyberbullying behavior (17.9%) was sending nasty jokes via instant chat, followed by sending a text to hurt someone's feelings (13.2%).

The composite bully visual score indicated an average of 1.71 ($SD = 7.99$) for the visual subscale. This subscale contained five questions, for a total range of scores 0–30. Upon examination of individual visual items, the results indicated that 8.2% of students reported using a cell phone to take embarrassing pictures of another student. The second most endorsed cyberbullying behavior was using a cell phone to send a photo to embarrass someone (4.6%).

Cyberbullying: Targets

There are also two subscales for targets of cyberbullying: text and visual. Composite scores were created for each by summing scores on all items. On average, the text subscale was 1.49 ($SD = 4.39$). Review of individual items showed that the most frequent behavior was name-calling via text, as this was endorsed by 19% of respondents (who stated that they were treated this way at least sometimes). The second most frequent behavior was hurtful instant chats (12.9%).

The composite score for visual subscale showed a mean of 2.78 ($SD = 3.88$). Review of individual items showed that 8.4% of respondents received a rude picture via cell phone (at least sometimes), and 3.8% reported that another student forwarded a video message via cell phone that the other student knew he/she would not like. Further 3.5% reported that someone used their cell phone accounts without permission to send a picture message to get the respondent in trouble and 2.7% reported their cell phone accounts being used without permission to send a video messages to get the respondent in trouble. Finally, 2.4% reported that someone got others to send a rude video message to their cell phones.

New variables were created that averaged items on the subscales (weighted averages were used as necessary) to explore the relationship between students who endorsed items on the bully scales (both traditional and cyber) and the items on the target scales (both traditional and cyber). Correlational analyses

were then conducted, and a statistically significant relationship was identified between traditional bullies and traditional targets ($r = .36; p < .01$) and cyber bullies and cyber targets ($r = .26, p < .01$), traditional and cyber targets ($r = .38, p < .01$). Although these were significant, the relationships are not strong, as evidenced by Pearson's correlation coefficients.

There were no direct questions eliciting information on the role of bystanders included on the RAPRI-BT. The researchers in this study constructed a set of questions to augment the ones on the RAPRI-BT. There are two specific questions related to being a bystander. The first asks participants whether or not they would tell someone if they were a bystander (responses options were yes and no). The other item asked participants whether or not they could tell something was serious enough to warrant telling someone (response options were yes and no). In this study, 53.7% of participants reported that they would tell someone, and the majority of students (88.2%) believed that they could determine whether an incident warranted telling an adult.

Bullying by Grade

The data on bullying by grade was analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with follow-up pair-wise comparisons. In reviewing the assumptions for the MANOVA, results indicate two violations. Levene's test of equality was significant, indicating a violation. The box test of equality was also violated. To account for these issues, an adjusted alpha of .01 was used. Descriptive data analysis included means and standard deviations for the five dependent measures by the four grade levels (see Table 2). The overall MANOVA was significant, showing an impact of grade level on bullying behavior ($F(15,894) = 2.78; p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$). Follow-up tests revealed there were statistically significant differences on traditional physical bullying ($F(3,328) = 6.21; p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$ and traditional verbal bullying ($F(3,328) = 7.40, p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .06$). Using the adjusted alpha of 0.01, this scale was the only one that resulted in a statistically significant difference among grade levels. Tukey tests were conducted to determine between which grades levels the differences existed. Significant differences existed on traditional bullying between all grades except fifth and sixth grades. It should be noted that the partial eta squared values yielded indicated small effects.

Targets by Grade

Analyses were also conducted for the targets of bullying (both traditional and cyberbullying), and

the means and standard deviations are summarized in Table 2. MANOVA results indicated that there was also a main effect of grade level for targets of bullying, ($F(15, 862) = 2.03, p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$). Follow-up tests reveal that there were statistically significant differences on the rates of traditional physical targets ($F(3, 316) = 3.78; p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$) and the traditional verbal targets ($F(3, 316) = 4.20; p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$). Tukey tests were conducted to determine between which grade levels the differences existed. Significant differences existed on traditional targets of bullying between grades 6 and 7, with seventh grade reporting the higher scores. Significant differences emerged on verbal bullying between grades 6 and 7, with seventh grade reporting the highest levels. There were no statistically significant differences between grade levels on targets of cyberbullying. It should be noted that the partial eta squared values yielded indicate a small effect.

Discussion

Corroborating other studies on the topic, a significant percentage of our sample had either perpetrated or had been the target of traditional bullying. While much public attention has been given to the overt and more readily recognizable physical bullying (kicking, shoving, etc.), the present study revealed that it is the least prevalent of the three forms. Consistent with Nansel and associates' (2001) investigation, our study found verbal bullying (making jokes about someone, teasing, calling bad names) ranked the highest of all forms of traditional bullying (with more than 60% reporting that they engaged in it). A high prevalence of social bullying (ignoring, turning others against another student, and intentionally leaving other students out) was also evidenced, with nearly half (49.7%) the respondents indicating they had exhibited these behaviors, providing further support that middle school students frequently engage in bullying behaviors (Nansel et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2009; Li, 2005; Mishna et al., 2009).

Cyberbullying was also prevalent among our sample of middle school students, with more than 15% of respondents reporting either perpetuating cyberbullying or being the target of it. Again, this prevalence rate falls within the wide range reported previously (Agaston et al., 2007; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Mishna et al., 2009; Mishna et al., 2010). Specifically, the current study revealed the most common forms of cyberbullying occurred with the students (targets) being called names through text messaging (19%) and the bullying behavior of

sending nasty jokes via instant chat (17.9%). This finding supports Smith and associates' (2008) study, which found instant chatting and bullying via cell phone as the most frequent forms of cyberbullying.

As noted by several prominent researchers (Pearce et al., 2011; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011) whole-school, systemic, sustained, multi-pronged programs tend to be the most effective for reducing bullying behavior. Programs comprised of cooperative multidisciplinary teams in which all areas of expertise are used, have been shown to reduce bullying behaviors and victimization rates (Ttofi & Farington, 2011). These findings lend themselves to practical implications for multiple members of the educational community.

Implications for Practice

School counselors. As noted previously, the authors assert that school counselors can play an integral role in developing and implementing comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention programs in schools. It is recommended that schools leverage the expertise of these vital members of the educational community, who are educated and well-equipped to create safer schools and successful students. As such, they are uniquely positioned to educate students, parents, and staff about bullying; facilitate communication around anti-bullying policies; and serve as a liaison and coordinator of inter-professional teams.

Educating multiple facets of the educational community has been shown to increase awareness of bullying and decrease bullying behaviors (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Therefore, school counselors can work with teachers to facilitate learning experiences and/or advisory programs that focus on empathy training, social skills, appropriate humor, and respect. Also, professional development experiences for teachers that focuses on how to talk to students who are aggressive or socially inappropriate with their peers should be planned and implemented. These educational experiences should also address how school personnel are expected to respond to and report bullying behavior (Feinberg & Roby, 2008).

School counselors can use web resources, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and lesson plans already established on sites such as www.cyberbully.org, www.digizen.org, and www.netsmartz.org. These readily available resources could be used for student, staff, and parent/family workshops on the topic (for a more exhaustive list of helpful websites, see Bauman, 2011). School counselors should be vigilant about communicating that they are open and willing to talk

about bullying and cyberbullying and make every effort to publically speak about it to students, parents/caregivers, and staff (Bauman, 2011; Bhat, 2008).

Families. As noted previously much of the cyberbullying behavior that spills into the school day was initiated at home (Feinberg & Roby, 2008). Moreover, as indicated by our study, very few parents talk to their children about bullying and cyberbullying, yet positive parental behaviors are associated with decreased bullying behaviors and victimization rates (Wang et al., 2009). Therefore, we strongly encourage schools to provide parents/guardians with educational workshops throughout the school year. For example, school counselors can conduct parent/guardian outreach workshops around positive parenting skill sets including setting limitations and expectations for their children's Internet use (see Commonsensemedia.org for examples of family media agreements).

Administrators. As previously noted, the most successful bullying prevention programs have included principal leadership (Pearce et al., 2011). Therefore, school leaders must first initiate clear school policies that specify all forms of bullying, including traditional and cyberbullying, will not be tolerated in the school. These policies must be widely publicized to students, staff, and families to create awareness by all parties. Moreover, policies that clearly specify the proper use of technology, called Acceptable Use Policies, (AUPs) (see Willard, 2007 for samples) should be developed. AUPs should include the types of technology covered (e.g., desktops, Internet, e-mail, mobile devices, etc.), security, download policies, plagiarism, personal safety, netiquette, and consequences to violations of the policy. AUPs should be created by a committee, that represents all stakeholders including community members, families, students, and educators (Bauman, 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007). According to Bauman (2011), it is important to include multiple stakeholders not only to get various and needed perspectives but also to "increase stakeholders' investment in promoting the document and ... [in] ensur[ing] that the needs or circumstances of a particular group are not overlooked" (p. 85). This committee should update the policy annually so that it stays current with the rapidly evolving technological advances. Committee members should also annually review the effectiveness of the policy by looking at measureable outcomes (e.g., decreased reports of cyberbullying at school, etc.) and make necessary modifications if progress has not been made. Each student should

sign the AUP, indicating they have read, understood, and will abide by the policy. The policy should be prominently displayed, distributed in newsletters and publication outlets, and be accessible via login pages of school computers (Bauman, 2011).

As highlighted in this study, the middle school years seem to be the most appropriate time for systemic whole-school programming to take place. It is recommended that school staff assess the needs of their students (Feinberg & Roby, 2008) and then begin implementing these types of developmentally responsive programs immediately. With the use of technology among young people increasing exponentially (Smith et al., 2008; Pearce et al., 2011), the time to do so is now.

Limitations

As with all forms of research, the selected methodology in this study has limitations. This study cannot be generalized to a larger population because it was a pilot study and was conducted with a small convenience sample. The current study emphasized experiences of middle school students in four particular Midwestern private schools. Therefore, there was no attempt to generalize these findings to other populations of middle school students. Additionally, this study was comprised primarily of White students. Furthermore, due to a survey error, approximately one quarter of students did not indicate their gender. While our study did not focus on differentiated gender behavior, there is evidence that girls are more involved with indirect forms of bullying (i.e., relational or social) than boys (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000; Kowaski et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2009). Suggestions for future research to address these limitations are offered in the next section.

Implications for Future Research

There are several areas that merit further research. Additional studies need to be conducted with multiple ethnicities, and these should span diverse school settings including public and private schools in rural and urban districts. Additionally, the behavior of male and female students should be explored in relation to how often they report bullying, to whom they feel comfortable reporting this behavior, and to what degree they feel safe discussing bullying with trusted adults. Further research is necessary to understand the complexity of cyberbullying, and the impact that psychoeducational interventions can have on the risks, attitudes, and behaviors often associated with cyberbullying (Mishna et al., 2010). Moreover, qualitative research, including focus groups, aimed

at uncovering the motivations for bullying behavior as well as students' feelings and thoughts about it should be conducted. Aiming interventions for bullies, bystanders, and targets is advised, with careful screening for group work. Finally, the authors believe the counseling profession should investigate the efficacy of implementing the specific counseling interventions recommended above, with pre- and post-test evaluations measuring the impact on student outcomes in behavior, attitude, attendance, and academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study adds to the cannon of literature regarding bullying and cyberbullying, particularly in the United States (Nansel et al., 2001; Kolwaski et al., 2007; and Wang et al., 2009), and further underscores the importance of swift action aimed at preventing bullying behavior. Specifically, the authors discourage the all too common "one-stop-shop" or "drive by" interventions that involve one brief staff, student, or parent training by an outside, unaffiliated entity. Rather, a multi-systemic, sustained effort by all stakeholders is necessary for the elimination of peer-perpetuated violence in schools (Pearce et al., 2011; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Congruent with these findings, the authors of this article encourage multiple facets of the educational community to partner with families and community members to build coherent and interconnected anti-bullying strategies in innovative and forward-thinking ways, ensuring that all young adolescents are safe and able to learn.

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Appendix: RAPRI_BT**RAPRI-BT***(Revised Adolescent Peer Relationship Instrument- Bully Target)*

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SECTION A: BULLY

Physical — Bully	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I pushed or shoved a student.							
In the past year at this school, I hit or kicked a student hard.							
In the past year at this school, I crashed into a student on purpose as he/she walked by.							
In the past year at this school, I got into a physical fight with a student because I did not like him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I threw something at a student to hit him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I threatened to physically hurt or harm a student.							

Verbal — Bully	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I made fun of a student by name-calling.							
In the past year at this school, I teased other kids by saying things to them.							
In the past year at this school, I made rude remarks about a student.							
In the past year at this school, I made jokes about a student.							
In the past year at this school, I said things about students' looks that they did not like.							

Appendix: RAPRI_BT (continued)

Social — Bully	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I got my friends to turn against a student.							
In the past year at this school, I ignored a student when I was with my friends.							
In the past year at this school, I ignored a student by turning my back on him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I ignored a student by pretending he/she was not there.							
In the past year at this school, I got other students to ignore a student.							
In the past year at this school, I left a student out of activities or games on purpose.							

Visual — Bully	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I used a cell phone to send a video of a student that I knew would embarrass him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I used a cell phone to forward a video of a student to embarrass him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I used a cell phone to take a photo of a student that I knew would embarrass him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I have used a cell phone to send a photo of a student that I knew would embarrass him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I have taken a video with my cell phone of a student being mean to another student, and sent this video to my friends.							

Appendix: RAPRI_BT (continued)

Text — Bully	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I used a student's e-mail account without his/her permission. I knew this would get him/her in trouble.							
In the past year at this school, I sent a student an e-mail with a message I knew would hurt his/her feelings.							
In the past year at this school, I made nasty jokes about a student to my friends in an instant chat message.							
In the past year at this school, I used a student's instant chat account without his/her permission. I knew this would get him/her in trouble.							
In the past year at this school, I wrote nasty things about a student on a profile page (such as Facebook or YouTube).							
In the past year at this school, I created a profile page (such as Facebook or YouTube) about a student, knowing it would upset him/her.							
In the past year at this school, I sent a student a cell phone text message knowing it would hurt his/her feelings.							
In the past year at this school, I deliberately left out a student by sending everyone a cell phone text message but him/her.							

SECTION B: TARGET

Physical —Target	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I was pushed or shoved.							
In the past year at this school, I was hit or kicked hard.							
In the past year at this school, students crashed into me on purpose as they walked by.							
In the past year at this school, my property was damaged on purpose.							
In the past year at this school, something was thrown at me to hit me.							

Verbal — Target	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, I was teased by students saying things to me.							
In the past year at this school, a student made rude remarks to me.							
In the past year at this school, jokes were made about me.							
In the past year at this school, things were said about my looks that I didn't like.							
In the past year at this school, I was ridiculed by students saying things to me.							
In the past year at this school, I was called names I did not like.							

Appendix: RAPRI_BT (continued)

Social — Target	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, a student would not be friends with me because other people didn't like me.							
In the past year at this school, a student ignored me when he/she was with his/her friends.							
In the past year at this school, a student got other students not to have anything to do with me.							
In the past year at this school, a student ignored me by turning his or her back on me.							
In the past year at this school, a student got his/her friends to turn against me.							
In the past year at this school, I was not invited to a student's home because other people didn't like me.							

Visual — Target	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, a rude picture message was sent to my cell phone.							
In the past year at this school, my cell phone account was used without my permission to send a picture message to other people to get me in trouble.							
In the past year at this school, a student got other students to send a rude video message to my cell phone.							
In the past year at this school, a student forwarded a video message to my cell phone that he/she knew I would not like.							
In the past year at this school, my cell phone account was used without my permission to send a video message to other people to get me in trouble.							

Appendix: RAPRI_BT (continued)

Text — Target	Never	Sometimes	Once or Twice a Month	Once a Week	Several Times a Week	Every Day	Does Not Apply to Me
In the past year at this school, a student sent me a nasty e-mail.							
In the past year at this school, a student sent me an e-mail threatening to harm me.							
In the past year at this school, a student sent me an instant chat message to hurt my feelings.							
In the past year at this school, my instant chat account was used without my permission to send an instant chat message to other students to get me in trouble.							
In the past year at this school, a student created a nasty profile page (such as Facebook or YouTube) about me.							
In the past year at this school, a student put something on a profile page (such as Facebook or YouTube) about me to hurt my feelings.							
In the past year at this school, I was called names I didn't like through a cell phone text message.							